

D#11 LIVE-WORK UNITS

SUPPLEMENTAL STAFF REPORT

SUMMARY: This Supplemental Staff Report provides responses to issues that were raised at a Planning Commission meeting regarding amendments to the Renton Municipal Code Development Regulations (Title IV). It also includes additional information that staff has identified as being necessary to include in the analysis for amendments.

General Description

Live-Work units would be a new mixed-use building form in Renton and an addition to the zoning use table. A live-work unit is generally defined as a unit where residential and non-residential spaces are combined where the proprietor can both live and work. Expected intensity in regards to quantity of customers, deliveries, and employees is less than a single purpose commercial space found in most business districts but more intense than home occupations. Live-work units provide a number of community benefits including flexible incubator space for small business growth, reduction in vehicle miles traveled between home and work, and space for smaller-scale services within neighborhoods. Elements of the proposal:

- Allow units in a few zones where Comprehensive Plan supports mixed-use development.
- The non-residential space would meet commercial building standards to mitigate against the unit being used strictly as a living quarter.
- Review through Administrative Conditional Use permit process, not permitted outright.
- Non-residential uses allowed in a unit would be retail, on-site services, and eating and drinking establishments as these uses are currently permitted outright or by conditional permit in the selected zones.

Further clarification of the proposal, changes to initial recommendations, and additional staff recommendations are provided below:

Planning Commission Issue: *Identification of where the use would be allowed through a Conditional Use Permit in the CN and R-14 zones.*

Staff Response: A map has been prepared to identify where live-work would be allowed in the CN and R-14 zones as shown in Attachment A. Specific to the R-14 zone, a condition in the proposal is that live-work units only be allowed along streets classified as Principal, Minor, or Collector Arterials. Only the R-14 zone parcels that meet this condition are shown in the attachment. This condition would keep neighborhood scale services close to more traveled roadways rather than in the interior portions of R-14 residential areas served by lower traveled residential local access streets.

The following street classification definitions from the Comprehensive Plan's Transportation Element (page XI-8) are provided:

- “Principal Arterials” are streets and highways that connect major intra-city activity centers, have primarily high traffic volumes that travel at relatively fast vehicle speeds, and therefore, have less emphasis on land use access. Grady Way in south central Renton and N.E. 3rd/4th Street in East Renton are examples of principal arterials.
- “Minor Arterials” are streets that provide links between principal arterials and collector arterials, and carry moderately high traffic volumes at less vehicle speed than on principal arterials. These arterials also connect intra-city activity centers with some emphasis on land use access. Southwest 7th Street in west central Renton and Union Avenue in northeast Renton are examples of minor arterials.
- “Collector Arterials” are streets that distribute traffic between principal and minor arterials and local access streets. Collector arterials include streets that provide major traffic circulation with more emphasis on land use access within commercial and industrial areas, and residential neighborhoods. East Valley Road in southwest Renton and N.E. 12th Street in northeast Renton are examples of collector arterials.
- “Local access” streets include all public streets not classified as principal, minor, or collector arterials. Local access streets primarily provide direct access to abutting land uses and are to be designed to discourage use by through traffic.

Planning Commission Issue: *Maximum size of the non-residential space.*

Staff Response: Live-work units have both a living and working space. No maximum or minimum limits for these two spaces were presented as part of the initial proposal. Commissioners asked about the potential negative impacts that could occur if no size limit was created for the non-residential portion where commercial activity will occur. Many of the commercial spaces in examples from the cities of Poulsbo, Seattle, and Hillsboro are small scale. Business types in these examples include on-site services and low intensity eating establishments that function within smaller spaces with minimal numbers of employees.

Staff recommends a limit of one thousand (1,000) square feet for the non-residential portion of a live-work unit. This condition can help mitigate potential negative impacts within neighborhoods. Within the last year, developers have discussed live-work projects with staff and non-residential spaces in these projects fit within a 1,000 square foot space.

Planning Commission Issue: *Addition of live-work units to the Commercial Arterial (CA) zone.*

Staff Response: The CA zone is a commercial zone along main arterials and transit routes that encourages higher residential density in mixed-use buildings. Although live-work units will not provide the level of pedestrian life envisioned along arterials, there is a need to provide additional forms of flexible mixed-use space for smaller scale services in these commercial districts. Live-work units do not function as higher intensity commercial spaces with foot traffic similar to supermarkets, pharmacies, convenience stores, etc., but they can provide commercial services a neighborhood would support. It is recommended that live-work units be allowed within the CA zone but at a distance of one hundred fifty feet from an arterial (principal, minor,

or collector). This condition would provide smaller scale flexible commercial/living space within this mixed-use commercial zone but not along high traffic roadways where higher intensity commercial and traditional mixed-use buildings are expected in the future.

Planning Commission Issue: *Internal connection between spaces.*

Staff Response: Traditional development in mixed-use buildings separate uses. Usually business space is located on a ground floor and living quarters on upper levels. To differentiate live-work units from the traditional mixed-use development style and allow for a hybrid form that falls between home occupation and traditional mixed-use, there should be a requirement that an internal connection be provided between the non-residential and residential spaces. Staff recommends that this type of connection requirement be established to create a true live-work space.

Planning Commission Issue: *Parking standards.*

Staff Response: The initial parking standard presented to Planning Commission required only one parking stall for a live-work unit up to 2,500 square feet in size. Although this standard is recommended as a best-practice for live-work units, fewer stalls would be required than the current City standard which may not provide the needed level of parking space for commercial activity.

Staff recommends one parking space be required for the living space. In addition to this residential stall, staff recommends parking standards for commercial uses be determined by current City code.